



OFFICE of INTELLIGENCE and ANALYSIS  
INTELLIGENCE IN FOCUS

3 JANUARY 2023

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*PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY*

**(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists in Multiple States Inspired by Violent Opposition to Public Safety Project in Georgia**

**(U//FOUO) Domestic violent extremist (DVE) attacks and sustained violent opposition to a public safety construction project in Georgia are likely inspiring likeminded individuals to mobilize to violence in solidarity against law enforcement, construction firms, and financial institutions in at least 10 other US states.** Over the past year and a half, DVEs in Georgia have cited anarchist violent extremist (AVE) and animal rights/environmental violent extremist (AREVE) ideology and anti-law enforcement sentiment to justify assaults, arson, sabotage, and other violent tactics intended to prevent the construction of an 85-acre public safety facility in Atlanta. Online support for sustained, violent opposition to the Atlanta project has helped amplify DVE narratives, such as anti-law enforcement sentiment and criticism of perceived damages to the environment. AVEs and AREVEs have adopted the narratives to justify violence against financial institutions and construction firms associated with the project in Georgia.

- *(U//FOUO)* Since May 2021, suspected DVEs who cited AVE and AREVE ideology have claimed at least 20 incidents nationwide associated with the project in Atlanta. There have been nine additional criminal incidents nationwide that we have a reasonable belief were in furtherance of the opposition, but they were not attributed to a violent extremist ideology, according to DHS reporting. Fifteen of the incidents occurred in Atlanta, directly targeting the construction project. Suspected DVEs who praised the activity in Atlanta and cited similar ideological motivations have claimed 14 incidents in at least 10 other states since January, according to DHS and nongovernmental organization reporting. Some AVE and AREVE claims of responsibility cited concerns about climate change as justification for incidents of property destruction, according to DHS reporting.
- *(U//FOUO)* Of the 29 incidents nationwide, law enforcement, construction companies, and banks have been the most heavily targeted. In addition to conducting assaults and arson, DVEs in Atlanta have consistently employed tree spiking and intimidation tactics to discourage support for the projects, including

one instance of doxing, according to DHS reporting. In December 2022, five individuals occupying a portion of the construction site were arrested and charged with violating several of Georgia's domestic terrorism statutes, according to DHS and media reports. Charges included deliberately damaging emergency vehicles and throwing projectiles at first responders. Outside of Atlanta, DVEs have predominantly damaged property.

- (U//FOUO) DVE attack campaigns to disrupt construction have had little impact on the project timelines, but they almost certainly have increased construction costs. Assault, arson, and sabotage attacks likely pose the greatest threats of physical harm to law enforcement, construction workers, and other personnel perceived by DVEs as being associated with the project.

### (U) Atlanta's Public Safety Training Center

(U//FOUO) In September 2021, the city of Atlanta approved plans to build a \$90 million public safety training center in unincorporated Dekalb County, along Atlanta's southeastern edge, according to media reporting. The planned facility sits on a 300-acre parcel of mostly wooded public land now considered part of the South River Forest, one of the largest forested areas in the Atlanta metro area. Some AVEs and AREVEs have repeatedly staged acts of violent obstruction against law enforcement and construction workers entering the site, including throwing rocks and improvised incendiary devices at or around officers and vehicles, slashing tires, and setting a vehicle on fire, according to media reporting.



(U) The planned public safety training facility will sit on a wooded area in southeast Atlanta.

(U//FOUO) A film studio located next to the planned training facility site has also recently acquired 40 acres of land. Although the studio's expansion is not related to the planned public safety facility, some AVEs and AREVEs have seized on similarities between the two projects as justification for acts of property destruction to oppose climate change and harm to the environment.

*(U//FOUO)* **We assess that DVE narratives inflating the perceived success of the attacks would likely inspire similar violent or criminal opposition campaigns at other construction projects nationwide.** However, DVEs who grow frustrated by their lack of progress could expand targeting to sabotage transportation and energy infrastructure or adopt more violent tactics to intimidate and threaten victims.

- *(U)* DVEs use narratives to reinforce the perception of their success by linking acts of violent opposition to a targeted construction project's logistical delays, lapses in funding, or scaling back. AVEs and AREVEs have characterized the attacks in Atlanta as a potential test bed for future violent campaigns, underscoring DVE interest in measuring the effectiveness of the attacks to potentially replicate or repurpose the tactics used, judging from open source reporting.
- *(U)* Previous AVE and AREVE attack campaigns – including at least one discussed among DVEs who support the attacks in Atlanta – expanded targeting to exact costs on industries perceived as complicit in advancing projects or research at the expense of the environment, judging from media reporting.<sup>a</sup> The potential expansion of targets associated with large-scale construction projects could include attacks against railways, pipelines, and electric substations, as well as emergency services personnel and real-estate developers.

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<sup>a</sup> *(U//FOUO)* Beginning in the late 1990s, and continuing into the next decade, AREVEs and other criminal actors involved in the animal activist campaign Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) engaged in sustained violence and criminal activity in opposition to Huntingdon Life Sciences, a contract research facility engaged in animal experimentation in the United States and United Kingdom. The SHAC campaign has been cited by suspected AVEs and AREVEs as a model for the current campaign in Atlanta.



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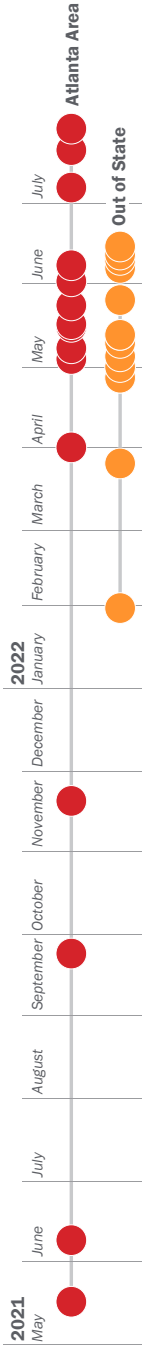
3 JANUARY 2023

# (U) Incidents Nationwide Linked to Ongoing Campaign Against Atlanta Public Safety Facility

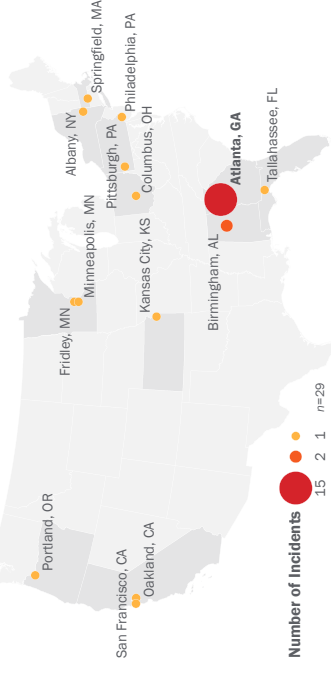
(U//FOUO) AVEs, AREVEs, and criminal threat actors opposing the planned construction of a public safety training facility in Atlanta, Georgia have waged an ongoing campaign of assault and property destruction targeting law enforcement and construction workers and equipment. Nationwide, AVEs and AREVEs in at least 10 other states have staged acts in solidarity with Atlanta-based AVEs and AREVEs by committing property destruction and sabotage against financial institutions and construction companies perceived to be associated with the facility's construction. There was an uptick in incidents of obstruction and sabotage starting the first week of May 2022, when suspected AVEs and AREVEs declared a call to action. The information cutoff date is 31 July 2022.

OVERALL GRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

## (U) Timeline of Incidents, May 2021 to July 2022



## (U) Incident Locations, May 2021 to July 2022



Date	Location	Target	Tactics	Motivation
17 May 21	Atlanta Area	Construction Company	Planned Training Facility	Property Damage
24 Sep 21	Atlanta Area	Construction Company	Planned Training Facility	Property Damage
9 Jun 21	Atlanta Area	Construction Company	Planned Training Facility	Property Damage
20 Nov 21	Atlanta Area	Construction Company	Planned Training Facility	Property Damage
31 Jan 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
26 Mar 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
1 Apr 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
27 Apr 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
27 Apr 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
1 May 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
4 May 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
5 May 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
8 May 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
10 May 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
13 May 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
13 May 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
16 May 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
17 May 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
24 May 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
26 May 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
2 Jun 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
7 Jun 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
10 Jun 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
12 Jun 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
15 Jun 22	Out of State	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
28 Jun 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
7 Jul 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
21 Jul 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson
29 Jul 22	Atlanta Area	Bank	Tree Spiking	Arson

Target	Number of Incidents	Percent of Incidents
Planned Training Facility	8	27.6%
Construction Company	8	27.6%
Bank	5	17.2%
Law Enforcement	5	17.2%
Office Building	3	10.3%
<b>Tactics*</b>		
Property Damage	13	43.3%
Arson	5	16.7%
Sabotage or Violent Obstruction	4	13.3%
Tree Spiking	3	10.0%
Assault	2	6.7%
Threat/Intimidation	2	6.7%
Doxing	1	3.3%
<b>Motivation</b>		
AREVE	11	37.9%
AVE	9	31.0%
Unstated	9	31.0%

\* Three of the 29 recorded incidents targeted two locations as indicated by the number of symbols.  
 \* Of the 29 recorded incidents, one incident on 29 July 2022 employed two tactics.

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**Source, Reference, and Dissemination Information**


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**Privacy and Civil Liberties Considerations**

*(U//FOUO)* The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics does not constitute violent extremism, and may be constitutionally protected. US Persons linking, citing, quoting, or voicing the same themes, narratives, or opinions raised by threat actors are presumed to be acting under their own volition, and to be engaging in First Amendment-protected activity, unless there are reasonable, articulable facts tending to show that they are acting at the direction or under the control of a foreign threat actor or violent domestic threat actor. Furthermore, variants of the topics covered in this requirement, even those that include divisive terms, should not be assumed to reflect malign activity absent information specifically attributing the content to violent domestic threat actors. Threat actors frequently amplify themes already present in lawful domestic debate. Lawful domestic actors in the United States have the right to use arguments originating from any source, even adversary narratives. This information should be considered in the context of all applicable legal and policy authorities to use open source information while protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

**Source Summary Statement**

*(U//FOUO)* We have **moderate confidence** in our assessment that DVEs' sustained opposition to a public safety construction project in Georgia is likely inspiring likeminded individuals to mobilize in solidarity against law enforcement, construction firms, and financial institutions in at least 11 other US states. Our assessment is based on DHS reporting, news media, and a reliable nongovernmental organization. We would have higher confidence in our assessment if we had additional claims of responsibility for activity outside of Atlanta, Georgia, where a violent extremist ideology is identified as a motivating factor.

*(U//FOUO)* We have **moderate confidence** in our assessment that DVE narratives inflating the perceived success of the attacks would likely inspire additional violent opposition campaigns at other construction projects nationwide. We base this assessment on historical incidents of these ideologies' supporters engaging in activity in opposition to a project, which, at times, escalated to violence. We would have higher confidence in our assessment if we had more reporting on an increase in incidents of opposition campaigns escalating to violence.

**Definitions**

*(U//FOUO)* **Anarchist Violent Extremists (AVEs):** Individuals who seek, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence, to further their opposition to all forms of capitalism, corporate globalization, and governing institutions, which they perceive as harmful to society.

*(U//FOUO)* **Animal Rights/Environmental Rights Violent Extremists (AREVEs):** Groups or individuals who facilitate or engage in the unlawful use or threat of force or violence with the intent to intimidate or coerce, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas by those seeking to end or mitigate perceived cruelty, harm, or exploitation of animals or perceived exploitation or destruction of natural resources and the environment.

*(U//FOUO)* **Domestic Violent Extremist (DVEs):** Individuals based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics alone does not constitute extremism and may be constitutionally protected. DVEs can fit within one or multiple categories of ideological motivation and can span a broad range of groups or movements. I&A utilizes this term synonymously with "domestic terrorist."

<b>Reporting Suspicious Activity</b>	<i>(U)</i> <b>To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement.</b> Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit <a href="http://www.dhs.gov/nsi">www.dhs.gov/nsi</a> .
<b>Dissemination</b>	<i>(U)</i> Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial officials, law enforcement partners, and private sector security partners.
<b>Warning Notices &amp; Handling Caveats</b>	<i>(U)</i> <b>FOUO:</b> This document is UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (U//FOUO). It contains information that may be exempt from public release under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). It is to be controlled, stored, handled, transmitted, distributed, and disposed of in accordance with DHS policy relating to FOUO information and is not to be released to the public, the media, or other personnel who do not have a valid need to know without prior approval of an authorized DHS official. State and local homeland security officials may share this document with authorized critical infrastructure and key resource personnel and private sector security officials without further approval from DHS.





Homeland Security

Office of Intelligence and Analysis

# Customer Feedback Form

Product Title: (U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists in Multiple States Inspired by Violent Opposition to Public Safety Pr

All survey responses are completely anonymous. No personally identifiable information is captured unless you voluntarily offer personal or contact information in any of the comment fields. Additionally, your responses are combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

1. Please select partner type:  and function:

2. What is the highest level of intelligence information that you receive?

3. Please complete the following sentence: "I focus most of my time on:"

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Product's overall usefulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's relevance to your mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's timeliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's responsiveness to your intelligence needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? (Check all that apply.)

- Drive planning and preparedness efforts, training, and/or emergency response operations
- Observe, identify, and/or disrupt threats
- Share with partners
- Allocate resources (e.g. equipment and personnel)
- Reprioritize organizational focus
- Author or adjust policies and guidelines
- Initiate a law enforcement investigation
- Initiate your own regional-specific analysis
- Initiate your own topic-specific analysis
- Develop long-term homeland security strategies
- Do not plan to use
- Other:

6. To further understand your response to question #5, please provide specific details about situations in which you might use this product.

7. What did this product not address that you anticipated it would?

8. To what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
This product will enable me to make better decisions regarding this topic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This product provided me with intelligence information I did not find elsewhere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. How did you obtain this product?

10. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your feedback?

To help us understand more about your organization so we can better tailor future products, please provide:

Name: <input type="text"/>	Position: <input type="text"/>
Organization: <input type="text"/>	State: <input type="text"/>
Contact Number: <input type="text"/>	Email: <input type="text"/>



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